

Venus Vs Mars

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Summary: After three years, Felix finds himself face to face with Jenna once again; unfortunately, the years haven't been kind to either of them. When they try to pick up the pieces of their once close-knit relationship, they find common ground in sparring matches between each other, and as Jenna creeps closer to victory, they reveal the lingering feelings that still divide them.

***Chapter 1*: Venus Vs Mars**

So, continuing on the road of me writing one-shots instead of working on my multichaps, this fic has been written. And, while it would probably make more sense as a Jenna/Isaac romance songfic using lyrics from the Jay-Z song of the same name (I laughed when I realized the possibility), it's instead a Jenna and Felix fic with NO romance. At least, not between them. And... yeah. I hope you enjoy!

Venus Vs. Mars

Felix slowly made his way through the forest as Jenna trailed behind him, the Venus Adept feeling relaxed for the first time in a few months; anytime spent away from Saturos and Menardi was time well spent indeed, and since it was time with Jenna, it figured to be even better. Figured being the key word.

Felix had come up with every excuse in the book to get Saturos and Menardi to let him spend some time alone with his little sister since she had been "convinced" to join their party, but the two Mars Adepts had, unsurprisingly, done everything to prevent that from happening.

Saturos had said it clearly: "Felix, we know you want your sister to escape from our clutches, but we need her to lure Isaac so we can obtain the Mars Star. Now, I don't think you would be foolish enough to try to encourage her to run, or even worse help her to do so, but... let's just say I don't want to give you too many opportunities to do something you would truly, truly regret."

Felix knew that doing anything of the like would lead to undesirable consequences, and as such did not have any intention of helping Jenna flee, although he wished with all his heart she hadn't gotten involved. Rather, he just wanted a chance to tell her WHY he was acting the way he was, and to explain the situation. He hadn't even managed to tell her their parents were alive, and had a feeling she would be much less miserable once she learned that fact.

The only knowledge he had managed to impart to her was to keep quiet and only speak when spoken to. And while Jenna was certainly fond of talking back, she had thankfully taken the advice. As snide as Saturos and Menardi were, the moment someone acted in a similar manner to them... well, they became ash.

Jenna had appeared more downtrodden and flat out-depressed than Felix had even seen her in the short month they had spent together. He was very worried that her sadness might be less of a result of her kidnapping, and instead lingering feelings from that night three years ago. He truly hoped not... thank Venus she had still had Isaac and Garet, and that they had survive the debacle at Sol Sanctum. Either way, he couldn't possibly understand what had gone through her mind and what must be going through it now. Travelling through an area where

Felix could tell how much Jenna despised Saturos and Menardi, and perhaps Alex to an even greater degree. Being so restrained, being in constant fear of invoking their wrath... it made him sick to his stomach, what Jenna was going through, as he had desperately wanted to save her from circumstances such as these.

What made him even sicker was how far apart he and Jenna seemed. Even though he had expected their reunion to be

anything but easy, the looks she gave him... they held such shattered dreams, such tainted love. Felix couldn't stand to see the person he had arguably been closer to than anyone else in the world looking upon him in such a manner.

So, he had managed to finally find a way to speak to Jenna in privacy; Felix had claimed to Menardi that Jenna needed to learn some basic combat in case she became separated from them or other extra-ordinary circumstances occurred. At first, the Proxian had claimed such an occurrence was too unlikely to give any thought, but Felix had alluded to their guarantee that Jenna would come to no harm and Menardi had scathingly agreed.

Once she had done so, Felix had easily convinced her to let him be the one to teach Jenna, as both Proxians thought such a task greatly beneath them, and both also knew Felix wouldn't let Alex and Jenna alone for a minute, let alone an hour to train. So, to his completely hidden glee, Menardi had, while giving him a glare of death so potent he had been afraid to thank her, allowed him an hour to take Jenna into the woods near Bilibin and train.

Felix had hoped that, once they had left, Jenna would become more like her old self; chattering away, teasing him, wondering what the rest of the day held. Felix should have known better than to have such foolish and naïve thoughts, with dead silence reigning as they neared a clearing a healthy distance away from the camp.

"This is good," Felix said quietly, stopping abruptly, and turning to face Jenna, whose eyes were staring at the ground.

"Why are we here?" She asked hesitantly after an awkward pause, causing Felix to groan and slap his forehead; no

wonder she had been so silent, he hadn't told her about the training, only to follow him and take the sword he had bought for her. "S-Sorry, I was just wondering," Jenna quickly added nervously, and Felix flinched.

She was afraid, of him. She thought he had been angry with her, and... Jenna's eyes widened as his face fell, and he sighed. "No, Jen, don't worry, I was just mad at myself for not telling you why we're here. I'm here to give you some simple, basic combat training."

"Oh. Alright," Jenna replied, still with a slight air of nervousness.

"But that's not why I really brought you out here, it's just what I told Menardi," Felix continued, moving slowly over to her, and putting his hand on her shoulder. To his immense relief, she accepted it and didn't start or appear afraid. "I... want to talk to you. About this whole mess, because there's more to it than meets the eye. But first... how are you doing?"

Jenna bit her lip, staring into his eyes with curiosity. After a moment, he realized she was sizing up whether or not she was talking to a monster molded by Prox, or her brother. He quickly softened his eyes, and hers followed suit. "Fuck them. Fuck all of this," Jenna breathed out harshly, and Felix swallowed but was silently thankful; she trusted him, despite the fact he probably wouldn't trust himself if he was in her position.

"I know. I'm... not like them. At least, not yet," Felix replied, squeezing his shoulder.

"I was worried about that," Jenna replied sorrowfully. "I... you've been so quiet. You've barely looked at me. I wondered whether or not my brother was gone, and after

thinking you were dead for three years, losing you again..." She swallowed, and he winced once more. All his worst fears were being confirmed all at once.

"There are a lot of reasons why what has happened has happened," Felix said, knowing they couldn't waste time. "Before I say anything else, there's something really important that you need to know. That day, when the boulder fell, I wasn't the only survivor. Mom and Dad, and Isaac's dad all survived, and were taken along with me."

The look on Jenna's face was of the deepest, most stunned shock as her mask broke and a light sob broke out. Suddenly she buried her face deeply into his chest and wept, and despite three years of being unused, Felix's brotherly instinct kicked in as he threw his arms around her.

"I know. I know," He said soothingly, patting her hair. "They need a Venus Adept to get into one of the Lighthouses, so in exchange for our freedom I have to comply and help them light the Lighthouses. According to them, it will save Prox... I couldn't care less, but I've done it for our parents."

"Alright," Jenna replied distantly, pushing away from him and breathing out. Silence once again fell between them as numerous questions and concerns filled Felix's head. Before he could speak any of them aloud, she coughed and said, "Well, we might as well get on with it... the combat. We don't want them being suspicious." She flashed a warm smile, and Felix chuckled.

"You're just as strong as I remember..." He reminisced, shaking his head. "Okay, I'll teach you some basic moves, just how to swing effectively and defend. And... don't worry about this quest. Just keep close, and follow my lead, and

things will work out fine." She nodded, and he sighed. "So, let's get to it..."

Twenty minutes later, Jenna was able to deflect a few weak blows and throw some decent ones of her own, and Felix was satisfied. Although this training had been a ruse to talk to Jenna, it was a good idea to teach her what little he could. Better safe than sorry.

As they made their way back to camp, Jenna smiled at him; a true smile, the ones she had worn so often in her youth. And despite their situation, and despite his lingering fears about her psyche, that smile convinced Felix that things would be okay.

Five Months Later, outside of Dalia

"Uh... you might want to shift your stance a bit," Felix remarked dryly, his sword held diagonally in the air. Jenna eyed him with confusion before glancing down at her feet, where her right was placed in front of the other. They stood in a grassy field, an hour-long walk away from Dalia, while Sheba sat on a nearby rock, chatting intermittently with Kraden.

"My... stance?" Jenna asked, a mix of nervousness and curiosity on her face. "Like... this?" Jenna switched her feet, placing her left in front, and Felix winced. He understood the necessity of teaching Jenna combat, as even though he had been trained in Prox, getting his ass kicked day after day by lightning fast and viciously powerful warriors hadn't really given him much experience, and as such he didn't feel comfortable protecting Sheba, Jenna, and Kraden all on his own.

For this reason Jenna needed to become at least competent in battle, as training Sheba was out of the question. The Jupiter Adept was too young, and too naïve. Of course, against the weak monsters they had been fighting, Sheba had snuck in a few hits here and there, but for the most part she listened to Felix, staying back and casting her potent Psynergy. However, having only one member in a combat party being engaged physically with the enemy, in this case himself, left the others wide open for attacks.

Above all else, Jenna really, really wanted to learn, and while Felix wasn't thrilled about seeing his sister on the front lines, he had to admit she had potential. For a girl, she was very strong, and whatever she lacked in full on force she made up for in speed, and a general knack for survival. Felix had already seen her make some surprisingly agile moves against a few beasts they had run across, but he wasn't taking any chances: he was going to make sure she knew what she was doing.

The few basic moves he had taught her for safety's sake while they had travelled with Saturos and Menardi had served her well, but just as Felix hadn't been used in combat then, neither had Jenna. Because, well, Saturos and Menardi would break most of their opponents simply by glaring at them.

He had been thankful that they could provide such protection for himself and Jenna, but... they had also kidnapped him, his parents, and then Jenna. This would not be the last time Felix dwelled on the mixed feeling he held toward the Proxian couple, even though they had passed on.

Their deaths had been unexpected, to say the least, but he couldn't say he was mourning. For one thing, their treatment of Sheba had been despicable, and for another, they were

just in general angry, egotistical, cruel people. Jenna and Felix had remained distant through the last few months, with only a few moments between them worth any recall. This was why, as much as it pained him to say it, Felix was excited about the Proxians' deaths: perhaps he could actually reconnect with his sister now.

At least he had the freedom to try, and when Jenna had suggested they practice combat, he had agreed for practicalities sake and the hope that it would lead to a revitalization in their relationship. To be fair, they seemed to be on decent terms, but some heavy cloud still hung over them, and he knew that it would only fade when they truly began to spend time with each other.

So, that left a very patient Felix trying to convey combat, at this point swordplay, to a relatively inexperienced but eager Jenna. She held her short sword in front of her with some element of grace and confidence, but it was clear to Felix that, in reality, she had no idea in hell what she was doing.

"No, I meant you need to squat a bit more," Felix replied, and Jenna frowned, embarrassed.

"Oh, right. Like this?" She asked, crouching a bit too low, and Felix shrugged.

"Er..." Felix began moving his hand up and down, Jenna raising and lowering her position in accordance. After several seconds, he felt satisfied that she had hit a good level of balance. "Yeah, there." She fell into the stance, and smiled, which was good as it let him know it was comfortable for her, and therefore most likely natural.

"Now what?" Jenna asked, raising her sword to a more combative position. "Shall we spar?" She giggled, and Felix sighed. He knew he was a crappy teacher, but he had been

hopeful that Jenna would make up for that by being a very solid student. Although at this point, that fact was still up for debate.

"No... we're going to go over some basic combat philosophy. Or, at least the philosophy you will be following," Felix replied, and Jenna's face sunk a little bit.

"Oh, alright. Go ahead, then. Teach me, big brother," She said, perking up in an instant. Felix briefly hesitated, trying to remember the last time she had called him those words. It felt like an eternity ago. She swiftly noticed the pensive look on his face just as he returned to focus, speaking before she could inquire as to his pause.

"You're smaller than me, and don't have as much inherent weight to your strikes," Felix began, watching Jenna carefully as he spoke. She was a smart girl, but he figured some of the terminology might go over her head, and that he could simplify it if he simply used more basic terms. "Uh, I guess what I'm saying is you lack some of my oomph."

Jenna giggled fiercely, and he could just make out a, "That's not the only thing you have that I lack," in the midst of her delighted chortling. Felix couldn't help but smile. Only Jenna. While they still had some awkwardness between them, at least she was returning to her old self.

"So, your goal is to be more of a hit and run kind of fighter," He continued, throwing any formal terms out the window. "I stay in the thick of things and keep slogging, but you want to jump in, do damage, and get out. Or, at the least, stay on the balls of your feet. Er, stay on your toes. You want to be in constant motion, ready to strike whenever you see an opening."

"Okay, I understand what you mean," Jenna replied, nodding. "I'd assume I should change up tactics based on the enemy?"

"Yes. Most of the time, and especially now while you're learning and getting used to swordsmanship, I'll try to give you information as to how to attack," Felix responded, satisfied that Jenna was catching on. "But, in general, you need to go with the flow. All of combat is finding out your enemys' strengths and weaknesses as well as your own, and exposing their weaknesses while minimizing their strengths but doing the opposites for yourself. I'm still getting there myself, to be honest."

"So, in other words, we could both use the practice?" Jenna asked with a smile, moving forward slightly, and tilting her sword out even more. Though she was trying to listen, and was indeed taking in his advice, she clearly wanted to battle.

"Yes, but... though I'm still fairly green to combat, you are moreso," Felix replied, trying to prolong the actually clashing for a bit longer. "I've trained with master swordsmen and some of the fiercest warriors on Weyard. And while I myself am fairly weak, I have learned many sword styles and am precise with a blade. I don't want to discourage you, let alone hurt you."

"I know you won't Felix," Jenna replied reassuringly, so much so that he doubted that fact himself. "You've never hurt me, you're too caring." While his face stayed still, his heart welled at those words. After all, there was nothing more important to him in the world than his sister, and he had already hurt her, however, unintentionally, by his absence.

"Then, I suppose I should shut up and we should duel," He said with a dry smile, drawing a grin out of Jenna. "I'll stay mostly on defense, and talk as you strike so you can improve. Come at me when you feel ready."

As she had been bouncing up and down on her feet the entire time he had been instructing her, Felix was not surprised that the moment his voice died Jenna rushed to meet him in combat. In fact, Jenna's face held much more shock as her sword sliced nothing but air.

"What a wild swing. Remember what I said about analyzing strengths and weaknesses?" Felix shouted, speaking even as Jenna shook off the badly botched attempt at an attack and threw her sword towards him once more. He could see from the glint in her eye her desire to win, perhaps more than to improve, but it was clear she was listening from the slowing of her swings and small pauses she now took.

"Think Jen. Think about my strengths, and weaknesses," Felix said, as Jenna brought her sword down once more, this time Felix bringing his own blade up horizontally to parry. She kept attacking him with head on stabs or vertical swings from above, both of which he was easily able to dodge. After a few more of the same strikes, he grimaced. "Jenna, what part about you can't hit me like this do you not — OOF!" Felix collapsed onto one leg, holding his side where Jenna's sword had been a split second prior.

"Or, maybe I was waiting for you to get frustrated and make sure my opening was completely open," Jenna replied matter of factly, still in her stance. Since they were, obviously, training, Felix had coated their blades in protective Psynergy, so they could not cut and acted as if blunt. In reality, their Psynergy would naturally protect them from such attacks usually; well, they would obviously hurt, and

often draw blood, but not cause the gaping wounds regular swings would.

"You're supposed to be taking this seriously, and fighting me like I'm actually your opponent," Felix muttered bitterly, sending a quick Cure into his side. Jenna had a damn good swing. "Mind games are good, but if we were actually fighting—"

"But we're not," Jenna replied, lowering her sword as she bit her lip. "You're only defending. To be honest, I feel much better about my offense than I do my defense. Please... don't hold back." Felix stared into Jenna's audacious face for a brief moment, before sighing.

Without another word, he leapt forward, propelling his sword in a vicious stab. Jenna just barely dodged it, slight fear and shock on her face being quickly replaced by satisfaction and excitement, and threw her sword out just as he flew by her, smacking his chest.

At Jenna's request, Felix had decided to completely forgo (or at least try to) any sort of restraint, and so as he felt the blade bounce off his chest he spun and sent his own blade slashing into her back. The strike sent Jenna spiraling into the ground, but rather than crumpling she rolled away from him, leaping to her feet and eyeing him with a composed face that Felix knew well. It was the same one she had adopted when they had played games as children, or whenever someone told her she wasn't capable of doing something.

After a brief stare-off, Felix realized that she, smartly, understood that getting him in motion, and getting him to chase her would be more beneficial than trying to assault him. After all, she was bound to have a bit more stamina.

Accepting her request, Felix dashed forward, feinting to her right before retracting and then cutting at her left. Jenna fell for the feint at first, bringing her sword to block his initial attack, but then quickly realizing her mistake and following through, transforming her block into a swing at his side while skirting to the right to just barely avoid the tip of his sword.

Felix grunted as his right side began to sting once again, and suddenly the battle seemed a bit direr to him. As hard as it was to attack Jenna, it was what she wanted, and while he had tried to remove any hesitation, it still seemed to grasp him. Yes, he wanted to help her get better... as it was, he had been shouting out tips for improvement the entire encounter so far, often without realizing it. But, she was right, she needed an actual opponent. And Felix was going to give her one.

As soon as Felix resigned himself to that fact, and turned up the heat, Jenna didn't stand a chance. He stopped trying to avoid attacking her weaknesses while playing to her strengths, and instead brutally exploited the prior and eliminated the latter. Her sword was held too loosely; Felix knocked it out of her hands, and got three quick strikes in before she could retrieve it. She was leaning too much to her right; Felix feinted right before slamming her left side with his free arm, knocking her off balance and letting him stab her quickly in the stomach. Finally, Jenna attempted another ill advised swing from above; Felix sidestepped effortlessly and brought his sword down upon her as she fell, sending her crashing into the ground.

Despite the obvious advantages he held, his clear superiority, and her numerous bruises and constant painful encounters with Felix's sword, Jenna did not seem interested

in the slightest in giving up, and as such they fought for well over two hours before Felix brought a halt to the fighting.

He had been nicked here and there and had worked up a thick sweat, but Jenna was simply a mess. Despite their precautions, her face was a little bloody, her clothes were partially torn, and he could only imagine that she was bruised from head to toe. As his battle instinct faded, Felix suddenly felt an overwhelming rush of guilt and self-contempt for having let them battle so hard for so long.

"Good job, Jen," He said, trying to be encouraging, walking over to her and liberally applying Cures. "You made progress, we'll keep working... but probably not to that degree."

"Why not?" Jenna asked as they moved over to Kraden and Sheba. Kraden raised an eyebrow, no doubt surprised their battle had grown so vicious, and Sheba's eyes widened.

"For Jupiter's sake, Felix! She looks like she got mugged!" Sheba exclaimed, punching Felix in the stomach before giving Jenna a shoulder to lean on. The Mars Adept, who was somewhat in a daze, smiled at Sheba's reaction.

"Oh, please, don't say that Sheba, he'll start holding back again," Jenna said wearily, shaking her head. "No pain, no gain. I asked Felix to not hold back, and he didn't. If you have a problem with that, take it up with me."

"Thanks, Felix," Jenna then said, turning to him. "It was obviously painful, but I really enjoyed it. You've grown up a lot... I remember you playing with your little wooden sword back in Vale. At least those creeps managed to teach you how to be a badass."

Despite his lingering self-anger at the beating he had administered, Felix couldn't help but smile. Badass? That was a new one. "And I remember you whacking on me with a wooden sword of your own," He replied, ruffling Jenna's hair. "Keep at it, you'll get to where I am in no time."

Four Months Later, on the Lemurian Ship

"BUT WE HAVEN'T TRAINED FOR TWO WEEKS!" Jenna exclaimed, pulling Felix's hair as he groaned at her insistence in convincing him to spar with her. The yanking on his hair wasn't too pleasant either.

"Jenna, we're on a ship," Felix remarked flatly, giving her a stern look that, while it clearly wouldn't keep her from pestering him, at least convinced it her to let go of his hair. "If one of us got knocked off, what would happen?"

"We'll be fine! I don't want to get rusty... and I was improving so much, too!" Jenna flashed him a serene smile, and he realized that as much as he hated to admit it, her berating was working. Felix couldn't really say no to Jenna, even after years of not having the opportunity. And, truth be told, while they still were more violent than he would like, their fights were very enjoyable.

He and Jenna were growing close again, but there were still a few issues hidden below a surface they weren't willing to break. For one thing, Jenna had been through a lot, much more that she deserved to go through, and part of her was simply unable to believe that he, let alone their parents, was alive. For another, he hadn't exactly stayed quite the same, and while Jenna certainly had changed with age and her

sadness, he had been through three years of a simply brutal society, and it showed.

Finally, they had been reunited while in the midst of her being kidnapping by him, and at the same time they had been forced to leave Isaac and Garet behind in a life-threatening situation; her two closest friends, and boys who he had once been very friendly with as well. Long story short, they still had things to work out.

Even after their small moment outside of Bilibin, during their journey through Angara to Imil and then Lalivero, she had spoken to him as sparsely as possible... even when given the chance. He had only been able to guess why, and had desperately hoped that she truly hadn't grown to consider him a lost cause, though that didn't seem to be the case. Felix had tried to bring up some conversation, but... casual chats didn't really happen all too often around Proxians, let alone Proxians who had kidnapped you.

But, in the last four months, things had changed. They had begun to talk, despite the awkwardness, and better yet she had begun to initiate the conversations. Felix was stoic as the very stones he often used to crush his enemies, and as such showed no indication of this, but he had missed Jenna terribly. His little sister had brought so much joy and love to his life, and seeing her so reserved around him, treating him so oddly... it had hurt.

And then, on the topic of pain, she had begun to push him to fight with her, and continue their now-regular sparring sessions. While at first he had assumed it was Jenna wanting to learn a few new tricks and to blow off some steam, it had quickly become clear that they held deeper meaning for her than it appeared at first glance.

Felix found the same had begun to hold true for him, as while they dueled, he would give her only a few suggestions here and there, and instead take the time to converse with her. As such, their battles had become both therapeutic, with both of them getting whatever was on their chests off on them, while still holding the same intensity, as Jenna clearly wanted to win each and every match. And despite her lack of luck so far, Felix had begun to wonder how long it would take her to do so.

"Fine," Felix grumbled, though silently thankful that she had pushed him into it; he had been missing the sparring a bit himself. They really needed to stop at land more often. "Why do you like sparring so much, though?" He asked, wondering whether or not her answer would match what he expected her to say. After all, he was the only person she ever asked to battle with.

"Oh..." Jenna replied, blushing slightly. "I guess it's because, well, we haven't had as much time to do stuff together. Or..."

"It's been hard, with the separation, to find common ground, and reconnect," Felix said, filling in the blanks, and Jenna nodded slowly.

"I thought it was a good way to bond while doing something useful to the quest as well," She said with a chipper smile, which Felix returned. Still... Jenna seemed a little caught up in his questioning, and while Felix knew she may just not have expected it, something about her smile told him she was hiding something. But, if she wanted to do so, that was her choice.

"I'm glad, I enjoy our sparring as well," Felix replied, patting Jenna on the head as he made his way to the other side of the deck. "Let's try to avoid the edges and falling in the

ocean, alright?" Jenna nodded with a pleased look, and within moments their swords were drawn. Another moment later, and their blades were clashing against each other.

Jenna had grown into quite the swordfighter, as was evident by her immediate flurry of slices and slashes. She had taken Felix's advice to heart, and rather than focus on heavy attacks to break his defenses, she struck with alarming speed from every angle. Felix deftly blocked each of the strikes she threw, but by the time he had gotten in his first jab, she had already swung her own blade upward around twenty times.

She still needed to work on her precision, Felix noted, as her next attack sailed clean over his head, giving Felix a perfectly open stab at her chest, which he took. Jenna also wore herself out, often assaulting him rather than getting him to come to her. That combined with her lack of power made it hard for her to get many blows into him, but even though her assaults sometimes did not hold a great deal of force, other times they certainly did. Felix had many bruises to atone to that fact.

Their matches were competitive, at least early on; once Felix began to wear Jenna down, her swings would get sloppier, and Felix would take advantage. The current duel matched this pattern, as Jenna darted this way and that, achieving body contact with her swordplay here and there. It took a good minute before Felix managed to land another blow, but it was a heavy one, and sent her sprawling backwards.

Never one to miss a combat opportunity, he ran to meet her with his sword, but as he approached she spun while on the deck and sliced at his ankles, causing him to collapse and trip over her. As he spat blood out of his mouth, Felix had to

give Jenna credit; he was easy to topple when one aimed for his legs, and she had picked up on it.

Felix picked himself up hurriedly, hearing Jenna's approach, and after feigning being injured to lure her in for a blow, he spun out and quickly swung. Unfortunately, rather than connecting with Jenna or her blade, he found only air. There was a split moment of peace where Jenna's smiling face bragged of her superior tactic, before her sword went flying into his side and he careened into a nearby barrel.

Felix decided this time, as he rose, to try something similar, but a bit more effective. When her footsteps appeared close, Felix turned and sprinted forward, this time holding his blade horizontally outward with both hands as to deflect any strikes by her and run right through her. Jenna wasn't suspecting the maneuver in the slightest, and as her battle-instinct was still lacking in terms of recoveries, Felix drove into her with his sword before pushing her off it and stabbing into her for good measure.

This time it was Jenna who flew into a barrel, and Felix, for the first time in a long while, laughed in the middle of combat. He would have never thought of that on his own, or possibly against anyone but Jenna.

"I didn't laugh when you flew into a barrel!" His sister muttered with mock bitterness as she rose, panting slightly but smiling. Felix shrugged, but darted his head backward quickly as Jenna shouted, "Sheba, watch out, we're battling!"

Instead of finding Sheba, when Felix turned he saw only the sky and ocean, but within a moment came to feel a very intriguing sensation: that of being tossed into said ocean. Once he overcame the initial shock of being thrust into

cold, cold water, he began to chastise her. "JENNA, WHAT DID I SAY ABOUT THIS!" He shouted as his "loving" sister cackled with laughter before throwing him a rope.

"Well... you said to avoid the edges, and I did," Jenna replied, pulling him up as she spoke, having a little trouble as he weighed much more than she did. A passing Piers, eyeing Jenna with concern, glanced over the ship only to burst out laughing. Once Piers joined in, they retrieved Felix fairly quickly, although the Venus Adept didn't seem inclined to say thank you.

"You probably could have done a better job of avoiding, though," Jenna teased with a giggle, and Felix rolled his eyes.

"Please, just dry me," Felix responded with a sigh, which turned into a groan as a wave of heat went through him. He didn't like Mars Psynergy touching him if he could help it, after some of the more brutal uses of it he had witnessed in Prox. "My hair isn't too... puffy, right?" He asked, knowing its tendency to look ridiculous after he swam. Piers and Jenna shared amused looks before turning to him and shaking their heads.

Felix narrowed his eyes, and pointed at his sister. "That's it. We're finishing this, and I'm not going to be nice about it either." Jenna only smiled in return, but after twenty minutes of sheer domination by him had passed she seemed much more downtrodden.

"You weren't joking," She muttered, rubbing a spare sore while casting Aura (Felix had greatly appreciated that Jenna had developed her own healing Psynergy as their quest had gone on). "Ow."

Felix frowned, moving over to Jenna as she crouched on one knee. "I'm sorry... I'll hold back next time—"

"YOU WILL DO NO SUCH THING!" Jenna shouted in return, smiling brightly as she rose. "What is the fun of having a brother or sister if you don't have a little sibling rivalry?"

"Gosh, you guys! On the ship?" Sheba interjected, walking between them. Frowning, the Jupiter Adept asked, "Why must you find the need to hurt each other?"

"It's fun, Sheba..." Jenna replied, punching Felix in the arm. "It's hard to explain, but... Felix and I have kind of reconnected by dueling. It gives us time to spend with each other."

"...You guys spend a ton of time with each other. Walking, sailing, eating, fighting monsters instead of each other," Sheba responded, and Felix shrugged.

"It's just something that works for us, I guess," He said, and Sheba shrugged as well. "It's weird, I'll admit, but we're not exactly a normal family or have had normal lives by any stretch of the imagination. I'm just glad we have the chance to do something together we both enjoy." At these words, Sheba smiled lightly, seeing the happiness in his own face and words, but Jenna's face positively lit up.

"Haha... I've been worried I've been annoying the hell out of you. I'm glad to see you like doing this too, big brother," Jenna said cheerfully, giving him an impromptu hug, which Felix returned after a moment of surprise.

"Awww... so cute," Piers replied from the steering wheel, drawing an eye roll from Felix, and giggles from Jenna and Sheba. Still, Felix couldn't help but enjoy the sentiment; he and Jenna felt close again. At the least, he felt like she still

viewed him as her brother, and that meant more than he could put into words.

Three Months Later, Outside of Contigo

"Have you seen Jenna?" Felix asked Piers with concern, the Mercury Adept seated comfortably on a leather chair within the inn of Contigo. It was growing dark, and the Mars Adept had, as far as Felix knew, still not returned from her venture into the town hours earlier. He could understand blowing off steam, but... she had agreed to be back before dark, and Jenna wasn't one to break her word.

"Hasn't come in from what I know," Piers replied with a shrug, as calm as Felix had ever seen him. Which was slightly odd, considering what awaited them tomorrow.

"I'm surprised you're so unstressed," Felix remarked bluntly, his mind shifting to their scaling of Jupiter on the next day.

"I'm kind of excited; I never thought I would see a beacon lit, let alone be a part of it," Piers replied earnestly. "Besides, what happens, happens. You said you believe Isaac's group is close behind?"

"I have a feeling, and Sheba mentioned some kind of vision confirming as such," Felix replied, sighing. "I didn't want to stop here for the night, but... we need the rest. Which is why I want her back here."

"Well, Felix," Piers replied with a smile. "I suspect I perhaps know why she isn't here. She mentioned something to me the other day about having a duel with you before we left for Jupiter..."

"And I told her it would be a waste of energy and refused," Felix interrupted harshly, widening Piers' grin.

"Well... looks like she found a way to get you out of the inn to grant her request, huh?" Piers commented, weathering Felix's subsequent death-glare with ease. "Good luck." With that, Piers turned and walked toward his room, leaving Felix to wonder if the mariner meant good luck with finding Jenna, or with the duel that would no doubt come as a result.

Somehow, Felix found her with ease, standing in a parched area just north of the Anemos Sanctum. She was staring at Jupiter Lighthouse, her head tilted just enough to let him know she was staring at the beacon, or at least where it would be tomorrow. Hopefully.

"Jenna, come on, let's go back to the inn," Felix said after a moment, mentally preparing himself for the question he knew was coming.

"No. Duel." Jenna turned to face him, her sword raised, and her face eerily calm.

"No. We can't risk serious injury, and it's already late," He replied flatly, yet he couldn't help but wonder what was going on. Jenna felt off... or, at the least, different.

"I need to beat you tonight, Felix," She whispered in reply, turning back to the Lighthouse. Jenna had come close recently; very close, her skills improving at a tremendous pace. As it stood, he expected her to finally win a match any day now. It just wouldn't be tonight.

"Jenna, it's just sparring," He replied with a sigh, moving toward her. "I know that, for whatever reason, it means a lot to you, and so does winning, but..." He trailed off as she remained still, and frowned. "But why?" He asked the

question nearly involuntarily, it having consumed him the past few months.

"...If I tell you, will you battle me?" She asked softly, and Felix narrowed his eyes.

"If it's a good reason, I guess," He replied, already knowing it would be. It was Jenna, after all.

"It's a stupid one," Jenna murmured, turning to face him once more, her entire body weary. "I need to know I'm strong enough."

"...Jenna, you're strong regardless of whether or not you can beat me in battle," Felix said softly, but she sighed and shook her head.

"You don't understand, Felix... I..." She closed her eyes and breathed in deeply. "It's my fault. ALL of it. And I won't let it happen again. I'm not going to lose anyone again, I can't. And if I can beat you, then that means I'm strong enough to stop anything in our way tomorrow. Including Isaac."

Felix noted her use of the word "stop", rather than defeat or kill. "What's your fault?" He asked calmly, but she simply shrugged. "Jenna..."

"That night, the boulder, all my fault," She sputtered, shaking her head. "If I had known ANY Psynergy... if I could have gone to get help faster... if I hadn't asked you to play by the river... all my fault. And those bastards changed you."

Jenna blinked, wincing as she viewed his hurt expression. "I thought they had made you into a monster because I was weak. I thought my brother was worse than dead, but gone. I thought I left Isaac to die in Sol Sanctum. I want to protect you Felix, and Isaac, and if I can beat you, I know I can do

that, because you're the strongest person I know. It's pathetic and childish, but I have to. Please."

Felix said nothing, unsheathing his sword, and Jenna's face broke into the greatest relief and thanks imaginable before shifting to pure determination. "Don't hold back," Was all she said before they were upon each other. He would honor her wishes.

Duck, fade, stab. Jenna didn't buy it, parrying his blow and cutting into his arm. Felix jumped back, content to let her come to him, but Jenna simply stared and circled slowly. After ten seconds, Felix noticed a flaw in her defense; her sword was too low, and if he moved quickly, she would be susceptible to an overhead strike.

The moment his blade began its descent, her small smile let him know his mistake, and he couldn't help but be proud; she had taken the move he had warned her about and lured him into it. Turning weaknesses into strengths, minimizing her weaknesses while exploiting his own, tricking him into coming to her. Well done, Jen.

Jenna's sword arm was nothing to scoff at, as Felix's trip to the ground proved. He darted up as quickly as he could, but that was too slow, as her darting blade began to streak into him. A slash here, a stab there, a glancing blow from above, Felix was hard pressed to dodge half of them. Jenna was on another level today, but he would not disappoint her.

Darkness had finally fallen, bringing with it rain; the only light illuminating their blades and bodies were faint glows from Contigo and the white stroke of the moon across the barren ground. Felix, as usual, began to warm into the fight as it went on, but rather than surpassing Jenna, he found her blows beginning to match her own. She still smartly would

rear away from his harder swings, but on occasion she would surprise him by clashing directly into his blade rather than parrying.

Felix dashed forward, and using his deceptive speed, came to a stop just as Jenna slashed with her sword. Once it had passed, he leaned forward, slicing down into her shoulder. It was by far his most vicious hit, and he heard a faint pop accompany the collision. In any other battle with her, Felix would have stopped then and there, but he could sense the urgency, the necessity of this duel. Jenna certainly showed no signs of slowing down, pain flashing on her face for but a moment before steely focus returned.

Felix knew he had to exploit her now weak shoulder, and as such directed a slice toward her right side; Jenna made him pay by sidestepping and slamming the flat of her sword into the side of his head. Felix saw stars for the next minute, as he was barraged with blows and stabs from her blade. Thankfully, as he came back to his senses, nothing had been seriously damaged as a result of her assault. Well, he felt like he had been run over by a few Thunder Lizards, but he would live.

Jenna panted as she stared him down, her one arm hanging limp at her side while her other grasped her short sword tightly. A tense minute passes, and Felix couldn't help but sense that the climax of the fight was near.

"Sucks when your own element works against you, huh?" Jenna suddenly called out before running forward. Felix, ignoring her cryptic words, lowered into his stance and prepared to strike.

To his surprise, Jenna leapt into the air well before she was in striking distance, pressing her sword out beneath her

horizontally, and sailing right over his head. It was an astounding act of athleticism, and Felix quickly tried to turn to take advantage of her landing. Instead, he felt his feet slide out from under him, and suddenly realized the meaning of her words; cursed mud.

Felix didn't even get a chance to get his bearings before he felt a stinging pain in his back and another, flatter pain below it. As her sword gently tapped his neck, he heard Jenna sigh and say in disbelief, "I win."

"Ow," Felix replied, and Jenna quickly rolled off of him. "Congratulations," He forced out as soon as he managed to turn over and regain his breath. "You won."

"I did," She replied, giving him a hand and helping him to his feet. Her face was beaming with pride, and Felix knew that the beating he had taken was well worth it.

"Do you feel any different?" Felix asked, and she smiled.

"I'm happy. I never really thought I could beat you, but..." Before she could finish, the emotion he had bottled up during the sparring match flared.

"Jenna, it wasn't your fault," Felix interjected, throwing his arms around her. As his newfound tears mixed with the rain, he felt the light kiss of Aura feeling his aches and wounds. He hoped partially that she wouldn't realize he was crying, but after a moment decided he didn't care. "None of it was. It was all... dumb luck, and circumstance."

"Mom and Dad certainly picked a shitty name for you, huh?" Jenna replied weakly, squeezing him tightly now that he was in better shape. "I'm sorry I was so stupid. I just... I..."

"I understand, Jen," Felix whispered, his voice cracking ever so slightly. "You felt guilty, and thought that you had lost me. But, you didn't. You're the one reason I didn't get lost, that I didn't lose hope when I was in Prox. I knew that I couldn't let them change me, for you. And I knew that... I had to get stronger, to protect you. I'm sorry I failed."

"Failed? I'm still here, aren't I?" Jenna giggled, and Felix smiled. "I'm not losing you tomorrow. Or Piers, or Sheba, or Kraden. Or Isaac or Garet, if we meet them."

"Yeah, we'll be really well-rested, huh?" Felix teased and he winced as Jenna stepped off his foot.

"Shut up! I needed to do this! I thought you understood!" She shouted in mock anger, and Felix sighed. Only Jenna.

"I do understand. There was something in the way, before, but I feel like it's gone. And I'm proud of you for beating me," Felix replied, ruffling her hair as he parted the embrace.

"I'm glad. I think that means more than the victory," Jenna said with a smile, before her face fell. "Um... Felix?"

"Yeah?" Felix asked, concerned.

Jenna coughed, and then grinned embarrassedly. "We can still... duel, right?" Felix smiled; did she even have to ask?

"Of course," He replied, patting her on the back with a slight bit of force. "After all, I have to make up for this loss and kick your ass."

"Hahaha, not if I have anything to say about it!" Jenna replied confidently, and Felix chuckled. Any doubts about

scaling Jupiter had left his mind; he had Jenna there to protect him, after all.

One Month Later, Outside of Loho

Felix yawned as he watched the waves while perched on a flat rock. Around him, the rest of the party was in a whirl of activity; Mia and Garet were unsuccessfully attempting to build a sand castle, Sheba had stolen Pier's bandana and was parading around with it while the sailor gave chase, Ivan was sculpting some kind of statue from drift-wood, and Isaac and Jenna were off to the side, chatting away.

Felix would like to pretend that they hadn't very obviously turned into an item as Sheba had insisted in Madra, but he had never been one to ignore the truth. As he pondered how he felt about his little sister being with one of his oldest friends, she galloped up to him with a wide grin.

"...Felix?" She asked, and his eyes narrowed. Yep, she definitely wanted something, and judging by her gleeful eyes it was something important.

"What is it Jen?" He asked, causing her to blush and look away.

"Uhhmm... Isaac was wondering if I would like to spar with him," She started, and Felix smiled. Asking permission to spar with Isaac? Only Jenna. "And... you know, it's kind of our thing, and I know it means a lot to both of us, so if you don't want me to—"

"Kick his ass," Felix interrupted with a smile, and Jenna gasped before bursting out into laughter and tackle-hugging

him. "No, not mine, his!" Felix muttered, as he landed in the sand, but couldn't help but be amused.

"Oh, believe you me, I will!" Jenna guaranteed with a smile, turning towards Isaac and shouting, "Hey, Isaac! We're all good, let's duel!" With that, and one more fond look at her big brother, Jenna leapt off the sand and skipped over to Isaac.

"I'll bet a hundred coins on Isaac," Gareth remarked with a smile. "He used to wipe the floor with Jenna all the time back in Vale."

"I'll bet you a thousand," Felix replied flatly, and Gareth raised an eyebrow.

"Haha, you've got yourself a deal!" The Mars Adept replied eagerly, and Felix smiled. That smile only grew wider when Isaac returned a half an hour later with a confused and defeated look on his face, while Jenna stood beside him smiling proudly. Felix would use his newfound coins to buy Jenna a new short sword: after all, she had earned it, and he doubted Isaac was going to take her so lightly the second time around.

One of the (many) storylines I wish the first two games in the series would have explored more in depth is Jenna and Felix's relationship. By The Lost Age they seemed fairly (well, Jenna did, as Felix was still quiet) comfortable around each other, but I always thought there might be some lingering issues and the like. I mean... a lot of stuff happened involving their family and they kind of got thrown into this quest.

So, that's what this fic is on a basic level; sibling bonding through the trials and tribulations of combat, and a

reconnection between Jenna and Felix. And an excuse for me to try out more combat! Which went okay. I think. Battle-wise, Jenna and Felix are, ironically, my favorite characters: Felix just does massive, massive damage, and Jenna is extremely versatile. A good range healing Psynergy, a great range attack Psynergy, and a great single attack Psynergy in her default class (not to mention some good class choices), and strong stats to back it up? Awesome.

I had quite a few issues with this one, the biggest probably being that the first section was added last... originally I tried to cover that section's major points with exposition in the next two, but it just didn't work, but it went kind of awkwardly as then I had to cut out pieces of info from the second and third sections that I wrote into the first. I also ran into some time-based issues, particularly with the idea that it took Saturos and Menardi a month to get to Bilibin from Vale. I guess Kraden was dawdling? I'm going to go with that.

This is also a pretty big one shot, the biggest one I've written since... well, Karis Claus, so I guess this is kind of dwarfed by that, but still. The length (and other issues explained below) is the reason for the delay in other postings, and while I kind of have writer's block with it, I suppose I really need to sit back and bust out MTJATE.

Huge thanks to VenusJupiter for providing editing and feedback! Originally I was really, really apprehensive about this story; this is the most revising I've done in awhile. I've come to like most of it, but I might go in for another substantial edit if any review makes me realize what I still find slightly off. Anyway, thanks for reading, I hope you enjoyed it!